

# Janet Mills

**Janet Trafton Mills** (born December 30, 1947) is an American lawyer and politician serving since January 2019 as the 75th governor of Maine. She previously served as the Maine Attorney General on two occasions.

A member of the Democratic Party, Mills was first elected Maine Attorney General by the Maine Legislature on January 6, 2009, succeeding G. Steven Rowe. Her second term began on January 3, 2013, after the term of Republican William Schneider. She was the first woman to hold the position. Before her election, she served in the Maine House of Representatives, representing the towns of Farmington and Industry. Her party nominated her for governor of Maine in the 2018 election, and she won, defeating Republican Shawn Moody and Independent Terry Hayes. On January 2, 2019, she became Maine's first female governor.<sup>[1]</sup>

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## Early life and education

Mills was born in Farmington, Maine, the daughter of Katherine Louise (Coffin) and Sumner Peter Mills Jr.<sup>[2]</sup> Her mother was a schoolteacher, and her father was a lawyer who served as U.S.

### Janet Mills



### 75th Governor of Maine

#### Incumbent

#### Assumed office

January 2, 2019

**Preceded by** Paul LePage

### 55th and 57th Attorney General of Maine

#### In office

January 7, 2013 – January 2, 2019

**Governor** Paul LePage

**Preceded by** William Schneider

**Succeeded by** Aaron Frey

#### In office

January 6, 2009 – January 6, 2011

**Governor** John Baldacci

**Preceded by** Steven Rowe

**Succeeded by** William Schneider

### Member of the Maine House of Representatives from the 89th district

#### In office

December 1, 2004 – January 6, 2009

Attorney for Maine in the 1950s.<sup>[3]</sup> Mills graduated from Farmington High School in 1965. As a teenager, she spent nearly a year bedridden in a full-body cast due to severe scoliosis, which was corrected surgically.<sup>[4]</sup>

Mills briefly attended Colby College before moving to San Francisco,<sup>[3]</sup> where she worked as a nursing assistant in a psychiatric hospital.<sup>[2]</sup> She later enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Boston, from which she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1970.<sup>[3]</sup> During her time at UMass, Mills traveled through Western Europe and became fluent in French.<sup>[5]</sup> In 1973 she began attending the University of Maine School of Law<sup>[3]</sup> and in 1974 she was a summer intern in Washington, D.C., for civil rights attorney Charles Morgan Jr. of the American Civil Liberties Union.<sup>[3]</sup> Mills graduated with a JD in 1976 and was admitted to the bar.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Early political career

Mills was Maine's first female criminal prosecutor and was an assistant attorney general from 1976 to 1980, prosecuting homicides and other major crimes. In 1980, she was elected district attorney for Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties, a position to which she was reelected three times. She was the first woman district attorney in New England.<sup>[6][7]</sup> In 1994, Mills was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Congress in the Democratic primary to replace then-Republican congresswoman Olympia Snowe. She placed 3rd, losing to John Baldacci.

Mills co-founded the Maine Women's Lobby and was elected to its board of directors in 1998.<sup>[8]</sup>

In 2002, Mills was elected to the Maine House of Representatives as a Democrat. There, she served on the judiciary, criminal justice, and appropriations committees.

## Attorney General of Maine

Mills was elected to her fourth term when the Joint Convention convened in December 2008 to elect the new Attorney General. She was elected and became the 55th Attorney General of Maine on January 6, 2009.<sup>[9]</sup> When Republicans gained control of the Maine Legislature in 2010, Mills, a Democrat, was not reelected to another term. In January 2011, she was elected vice chair of the Maine Democratic Party.<sup>[10]</sup> She joined the law firm Preti Flaherty in February 2011 as a lawyer with the firm's Litigation Group in its Augusta, Maine office.<sup>[11]</sup> After Democrats regained control of the legislature in the 2012 elections, she was again chosen to be attorney general, resigned as vice chair of the Maine Democratic Party,<sup>[12]</sup> and took the oath of office as attorney general on January 7, 2013.<sup>[13]</sup> She was reelected on December 3, 2014, despite the Maine Senate coming under Republican control.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Preceded by** Lillian LaFontaine O'Brien

**Succeeded by** Lance Harvell

**Member of the  
Maine House of Representatives  
from the 78th district**

**In office**

December 4, 2002 – December 1, 2004

**Preceded by** Walter Gooley

**Succeeded by** Robert Nutting

**Personal details**

**Born** Janet Trafton Mills  
December 30, 1947  
Farmington, Maine,  
U.S.

**Political party** Democratic

**Spouse(s)** Stanley Kuklinski  
(m. 1985; died 2014)

**Relatives** Peter Mills (brother)

**Residence** Blaine House

**Alma mater** University of Massachusetts Boston (BA)  
University of Maine (JD)

**Website** Government website  
(http://maine.gov/governor/mills)  
Campaign website  
(http://janetmills.com)

Republican Governor Paul LePage opposed Mills being attorney general, due to many disputes between them over the legality of some of LePage's policies.<sup>[15]</sup> On January 28, 2015, LePage requested the Maine Supreme Judicial Court's opinion as to whether it was legal for the governor's office to need the Attorney General's office's permission to retain outside counsel when the Attorney General declines to represent the State in a legal matter. LePage did so after Mills twice declined to represent LePage in matters she determined had little legal merit, though she approved his requests for outside lawyers.<sup>[16]</sup> On May 1, 2017, LePage sued Mills, asserting that she had abused her authority by refusing to represent the state in legal matters, or taking a legal view contrary to the LePage administration's.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Governor of Maine

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### Elections

On July 10, 2017, Mills announced that she would seek the Democratic nomination for governor of Maine in 2018.<sup>[18]</sup> One of several candidates in the primary, she won the nomination in June, finishing first after four rounds of ranked-choice voting gave her 54% to her closest competitor's 46%.<sup>[19]</sup>

In the general election, Mills faced Republican businessman Shawn Moody, independent Maine State Treasurer Terry Hayes and independent businessman Alan Caron. Endorsed by every major newspaper in Maine and the *Boston Globe*, buoyed by major ad buys from Democratic political action committees and receiving Caron's endorsement a week before the polls closed, Mills won the election with 50.9% to Moody's 43.2%. She became Maine's first female governor, the first Maine gubernatorial candidate to be elected with at least 50% of the vote since Angus King in 1998, and the first to win at least 50% of the vote for a first term since Kenneth M. Curtis in 1966. She received over 320,000 votes, more than any governor in the state's history.<sup>[20]</sup>

Mills's campaign was aided in part by a Democratic super PAC that financed Maine-themed ads meant to attract young voters on social media.<sup>[21]</sup> Both Mills and outside groups outspent Moody by an average of \$15 per vote cast, for a total of \$10.7 million. These numbers, however, are less than those of the 2nd District Congressional race of the same year, in which Democrat Jared Golden spent \$131 per vote and incumbent Republican Bruce Poliquin spent \$95.<sup>[22]</sup>

### Term

One of Mills's first acts as governor was to sign an executive order to carry out the expansion of Maine's Medicaid program as called for by a 2017 referendum, something LePage had refused to do. This fulfilled a major campaign pledge.<sup>[23]</sup> Mills also dropped work requirements for Medicaid that LePage had requested toward the end of his tenure and that had the Trump Administration's approval. She said the work requirements "leave more Maine people uninsured without improving their participation in the workforce".<sup>[24]</sup>

Mills revived the tradition of Maine governors attending Martin Luther King Day commemoration events in Portland, doing so in 2019.<sup>[25]</sup>

In September 2019, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres asked Mills to speak at the General Assembly on climate change. Mills told world leaders at the UN that she intends to make Maine carbon neutral by 2045.<sup>[26]</sup> She was the first sitting Maine governor to address the General Assembly.<sup>[27]</sup>

# Political positions

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## LGBT rights

Mills supports LGBT rights. In May 2019, she signed a bill banning conversion therapy, the pseudoscientific practice aimed at changing one's sexual orientation or gender identity, from being used on minors.<sup>[28][29][30]</sup> One year earlier, the same bill had passed both chambers of the Maine Legislature, but was vetoed by then-Governor Paul LePage.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Tribal relations

Mills has taken steps to improve relations with Maine's native tribes, despite her prior rocky relationship with them as Attorney General. This includes signing a bill to replace the Columbus Day state holiday with Indigenous People's Day, and pledging to work to fill seats on a state-tribal commission that had been left empty under her predecessor.<sup>[32]</sup> She also signed a bill to establish stricter water quality standards for rivers used by Maine's tribes for sustenance fishing, something long sought by the tribes. It also ended a legal dispute between the tribes and the state, for which Mills as Attorney General had defended the state's position.<sup>[33]</sup>

As Governor-Elect, she stated that the use of Native American imagery and nomenclature associated with Maine School District 54 and its Skowhegan establishment as being "a source of pain and anguish" for the state's Indigenous population.<sup>[34]</sup> After officially assuming office, she signed into law a measure to ban the use of such references in public schools.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Abortion

Mills has taken steps to expand access to abortion procedures, signing legislation to mandate that both public and private insurance agencies include abortion procedures within the scope of their coverage.<sup>[36]</sup>

## Environmental issues

Mills has enacted regulations to curb the use of materials that harm the environment. One such policy includes prohibiting the use of plastic bags by Maine retailers set to go into effect on 22 April 2020.<sup>[37]</sup> She also signed into law a ban on the use of styrofoam containers by various industries within the state. This regulation will become effective 1 January 2021.<sup>[38]</sup>

In 2019, the Central Maine Power Company was granted all necessary permissions to begin work on a corridor running from Beattie Township to a power grid in Lewiston, Maine.<sup>[39]</sup> Despite Mills' initial skepticism of the proposal and pushback among critics, changes to the budget caused Mills to sign the agreement.<sup>[40][41]</sup>

Mills has also enacted regulatory standards for the quality of water on Indigenous reservations used for sustenance fishing.<sup>[33]</sup>

During her remarks at the UN General Assembly, Mills pledged that Maine would have a carbon-neutral economy by 2045.<sup>[42]</sup>

# Family

In 1985 Mills married real estate developer Stanley Kuklinski, with whom she had five stepdaughters and three stepgrandsons and two stepgranddaughters. Kuklinski died due to the effects of a stroke on September 24, 2014.<sup>[43]</sup> She is the sister of Peter Mills, a former Republican state senator and gubernatorial candidate in 2006 and 2010.

## See also

- List of female governors in the United States
- List of female state attorneys-general in the United States

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## External links

- Janet Mills for Maine (<https://www.janetmills.com/>) campaign website
- Office of the Governor of Maine (<http://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/>) government website
- Janet Mills ([https://ballotpedia.org/Janet\\_Mills](https://ballotpedia.org/Janet_Mills)) at Ballotpedia
- Janet Mills ([http://www.ontheissues.org/Janet\\_Mills.htm](http://www.ontheissues.org/Janet_Mills.htm)) at On the Issues
- Profile (<https://www.votesmart.org/candidate/36856>) at Vote Smart
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?janetmills>) on C-SPAN

### Maine House of Representatives

Preceded by <b>Walter Gooley</b>	<b>Member of the Maine House of Representatives from the 78th district</b> 2002–2004	Succeeded by <b>Robert Nutting</b>
Preceded by <b>Lillian LaFontaine O'Brien</b>	<b>Member of the Maine House of Representatives from the 89th district</b> 2004–2009	Succeeded by <b>Lance Harvell</b>

### Legal offices

Preceded by <b>Steven Rowe</b>	<b>Attorney General of Maine</b> 2009–2011	Succeeded by <b>William Schneider</b>
Preceded by <b>William Schneider</b>	<b>Attorney General of Maine</b> 2013–2019	Succeeded by <b>Aaron Frey</b>

### Party political offices

Preceded by <b>Mike Michaud</b>	<b>Democratic nominee for Governor of Maine</b> 2018	<b>Most recent</b>
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### Political offices

Preceded by <b>Paul LePage</b>	<b>Governor of Maine</b> 2019–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
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### U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)

Preceded by <b>Mike Pence</b> <i>as Vice President</i>	<b>Order of Precedence of the United States</b> Within Maine	Succeeded by <b>Mayor of city</b> in which event is held
		Succeeded by <b>Otherwise Nancy Pelosi</b> <i>as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</i>
Preceded by <b>Kay Ivey</b> <i>as Governor of Alabama</i>	<b>Order of Precedence of the United States</b> Outside Maine	Succeeded by <b>Mike Parson</b> <i>as Governor of Missouri</i>

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